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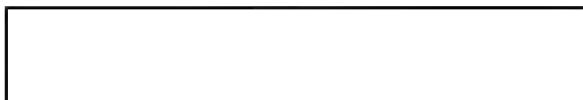
DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

Top Secret

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23 November 1966

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HIGHLIGHTS

The new commander of South Vietnam's IV Corps, General Manh, took his post today. General Quang, the former IV Corps commander, is expected to leave the Corps area soon for his new cabinet post in Saigon.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:

The Suoi Da Special Forces camp and a divisional support base were hit with 20 mortar rounds on 22 November; six Americans were wounded (Para. 1). US Marines report killing 40 Communist troops near Da Nang and Chu Lai (Paras. 2-3). A total of 56 Viet Cong were killed by CIDG troops who may have violated the Cambodian border (Para. 4).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:

General Manh was installed on 23 November as the new IV Corps commander (Paras. 1-2).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:

An article in the North Vietnamese Army journal has expressed concern over the morale and attitudes of North Vietnamese troops (Paras. 1-3).

IV. Other Communist Military Developments:

There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments:

There is nothing of significance to report.



I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. A mortar attack was launched against the Suoi Da Special Forces camp and a US 1st Infantry Division support base seven miles northeast of Tay Ninh city in the Operation ATTLEBORO area late on 22 November. Twenty mortar rounds were fired at the installations during a ten-minute attack. Six Americans were wounded.

2. US Marines, supported by tactical air strikes, artillery, and tanks, reported killing 40 Communist troops near Da Nang and Chu Lai on 22 November. One group of 25 Viet Cong were trapped on a small peninsula 13 miles southwest of Chu Lai; fifteen of them were killed by air strikes and the other ten by ground action.

3. A US Marine patrol was fired upon about seven miles southwest of Da Nang on 22 November. The Marines returned the enemy fire and directed artillery fire at the enemy positions. The Marines found 13 Viet Cong bodies during a sweep of the battle area. No American casualties were reported. Several other small skirmishes were also reported nearby.

4. South Vietnamese Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) troops, assisted by US Special Forces and US naval personnel, may have violated the Cambodian border about 42 miles west of Saigon. Late on 22 November, contact was made with a Communist force which was pursued with airboats and helicopters. The enemy force turned northward toward the Cambodian border and the South Vietnamese troops attempted to establish a blocking force northwest of the enemy force. As the helicopter-borne CIDG force was landed, it was fired upon from an unidentified village to the north. A Viet Cong flag at the village was hauled down and replaced with a Cambodian flag. The CIDG force, unsure of whether it was in South Vietnam or Cambodia, left the area. A total of 56 Viet Cong were killed and 11 weapons captured. CIDG casualties were two wounded.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. General Nguyen Van Manh was officially installed as the commander of IV Corps in a simple ceremony at the corps headquarters in the delta city of Can Tho on the morning of 23 November. Ex-corps commander Dang Van Quang, now minister of planning and development, is expected to move to Saigon this weekend.

2. Public reaction in the delta to the reassignments is reportedly one of apathy, except for those lesser officials who fear that they may lose their jobs as a result of Quang's departure.

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. A 1 November article in the North Vietnamese Army journal contained a frank discussion of ideological and morale problems facing the North Vietnamese Army. The tone of the article suggested that troop morale may be failing in the face of the defeats being suffered by Communist forces in South Vietnam. The article maintained that because "we are encountering difficulties, does not mean that we are not becoming stronger," and claimed that "suffering losses and making sacrifices do not mean that we are not winning."

2. The article attributed loss of confidence in victory to errors in leadership and implied that "misleading thoughts" had been allowed "to spread widely" before attempts were made to correct them. It also implied that the leadership had lost contact with the "masses" and, consequently, had failed to adopt correct methods of bolstering popular morale.

3. The article concluded that the war will cause more losses to the Vietnamese Communists, but if the North Vietnamese will "prepare" their minds, they will "always be optimistic" and will "win greater victories under any circumstances."

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